

Craighead Environmental Research Institute

Monthly Progress Report: April, 2008

for the Montana Department of Transportation and Western
Transportation Institute

Bozeman Pass Wildlife Monitoring

MSU banner number 426899

1 April 2008 – 30 April 2008

Task 1: Road Kill Surveys during April 2008

Road kill surveys were conducted between Bozeman and Jackson Creek. Surveys were conducted on both sides of I-90 from Bozeman to Jackson Creek and back for a total of 22 miles round trip and an estimated 1 hour of labor per survey. Thirteen (13) road-kill surveys were driven during April of 2008. Five (5) of those recorded no new road-kill. This equals 286 miles driven in April for this subcontract. Totals of animals killed between Bozeman and Livingston were:

Bozeman Pass Roadkill Totals	April
Species	Number
Badger	0
Beaver	0
Bobcat	0
Bird Spp.	0
Black Bear	0
Cowbird	0
Coyote	1
Deer species	0
Dog	0
Domestic cat	0
Elk	0
Great Horned Owl	1
Ground Squirrel	1
Hungarian (Gray) Partridge	0
Long-eared Owl	1
Magpie	0
Mallard	0
Marmot	0
Meadowlark	0

Mink	0
Moose	0
Mule Deer	0
Pigeon	0
Porcupine	1
Rabbit	5
Raccoon	1
Red Fox	0
Ruffed Grouse	1
Snowshoe Hare	0
Skunk	3
Small mammal spp.	0
Weasel	0
White Tail Deer	4

Task 2: Track bed monitoring at the MRL Bridge in April 2008

Because of snow conditions no opportunistic track bed sessions were completed in April. Track bed survey sessions are beginning in May. One whitetailed deer was found dead underneath the MRL bridge near the track bed in early May; it may have been killed on the highway and knocked off the bridge, or killed by a train.

Task 3: Photo monitoring at fence ends through April 2008

Cameras were not downloaded during April. Batteries for all remote cameras were operational. The small locks that keep the RECONYX cameras shut were rusted closed when we attempted to download at the end of April. We will download in early May and use lubricant to release the locks or cut them off if needed and replace them.

Task 4: Infrared counter monitoring at jump-outs through April 2008

The Trailmaster sensors are often triggered by false events and adjustment of counter sensitivity settings has been unable to make them reliable. They were not checked during April.

Task 5: Track bed monitoring at fence ends, jump-outs through April 2008

Because of snow and freezing conditions, track beds were not opportunistically checked during April. One whitetailed deer was found dead inside the fence on the slope above the SE jumpout. It was apparently killed by a vehicle collision and dropped down the slope where it was out of site from the highway; it was probably killed in April, but was discovered in May.

Task 6: Photo monitoring of culverts April 2008

The culvert cameras were not downloaded in April. Batteries for all remote cameras were replaced at the end of October and should last through the winter. High water in the culverts will preclude downloading until late May or June.

Task 7: Opportunistic snow tracking at track bed, fence ends, jump-outs, and along the Interstate in April 2008.

Snow conditions did not allow opportunistic tracking of highway crossings along the Interstate in April.

Task 8: Data Management & Reporting in April 2008

Data entry and summary required two hours during April.

Discussion:

Data and observations from March and April indicate that the fencing is not 100% effective at keeping animals off the road surface in the study area. At least one whitetailed deer was killed inside the fence. There is a possibility that a second one was killed on the bridge, but there is no way to tell for certain. Still, the rate of roadkill has declined dramatically within the fenced-in study area.